

**CONTENT DELIVERY NETWORK (CDN) CONTENT SERVER REQUEST
HANDLING MECHANISM WITH METADATA FRAMEWORK SUPPORT****ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

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To serve content through a content delivery network (CDN), the CDN must have some information about the identity, characteristics and state of its target objects. Such additional information is provided in the form of object metadata, which according to the invention can be located in the request string itself, in the response headers from the origin server, in a metadata configuration file distributed to CDN servers, or in a per-customer metadata configuration file. CDN content servers execute a request identification and parsing process to locate object metadata and to handle the request in accordance therewith. Where different types of metadata exist for a particular object, metadata in a configuration file is overridden by metadata in a response header or request string, with metadata in the request string taking precedence.